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TCS-2967-58

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28 March 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Proposal for the Establishment of the
Photographic Intelligence Center

REFERENCE : TCS-2821-58

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1. During your recent absence [REDACTED] provided to this office a copy of referenced paper and requested my comments.

2. Experience has, I believe, shown that the functions performed by units of ORR and OCR (as HTAUTOMAT) and placed together in a single building where close working relationships were possible, was proper and essential for the exploitation of aerial photographic materials. It may be due to the extraordinary pressures of the moment but nonetheless it is true that somehow the two units have worked well together under the leadership of Mr. Lundahl and no serious problem has arisen, at least as I see it, in the reporting of the two units through their respective Assistant Directors or directly to you.

3. However, it would seem that the present situation does not fully allow those Assistant Directors to exercise responsibility over the administrative functions of HTAUTOMAT and at the same time it may be that your own office is not in a position to carry out the type of administrative supervision which Assistant Directors are normally expected to exercise. In any event, Messrs. Lundahl and [REDACTED] are faced with somewhat confused administrative channels upward.

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4. The proposal at hand is, it seems to me, a reasonable method to clarify the position of HTAUTOMAT and, in addition, has the very important merit of placing upon that organization the full responsibility to gear itself administratively to become as nearly as possible "normal". By this I mean that if the proposal were approved HTAUTOMAT would presumably then have to handle its own budget

justifications and fiscal affairs and make such adjustments as are required to fit into the personnel policies (bearing upon assignment, reassignment, grade structure, and career service) as apply to other units of the Agency.

5. Whereas the future and what it may bring in the way of new aerial photographic materials cannot be detailed exactly, it is my strong conviction that from one type of collection or another this Government is likely to continue to receive high grade photographic materials which can provide new and hard intelligence information of critical importance.

6. While it is true that HTAUTOMAT thus far has accommodated in its midst the representatives of the Army, Navy, and Air Force in a commendable fashion and whereas the office does bear certain types of responsibilities vis-a-vis [REDACTED] (advising them on technical matters), these things do not appear to me to be the significant reasons for accepting the proposal for the center. These things are all to the good, and HTAUTOMAT has performed commendably in these regards. The important consideration, however, is the continued development of a PI unit in the United States Government manned with personnel of likely permanent status and charged with pushing ahead on all aspects of R&D bearing upon the exploitation of photographic interpretation and available for advice in the preparation of collection operations. 25X1X7

7. For the foregoing reasons, and on the basis of what I know about this matter, I am inclined to recommend that you approve the proposal for the establishment of the center. I should emphasize, however, that I have not been exposed to any of the arguments (if there be such) against this action. Moreover, I do not feel that the existing administrative arrangements for HTAUTOMAT have adversely affected its operations or would be likely to do so in the future. The case for a change seems to me to rest on considerations of administrative convenience. Finally, I am sure you realize I have not felt called upon to evaluate in detail the plans for organization and the staffing pattern discussed in the HTAUTOMAT proposal.

RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Project Director

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